

ITS and Environmental Technology in the Automobile Industry of Germany: An International Comparison of Car Culture

ABSTRACT

In the car industry, which was a typical industry in the 20th century, various problems of environmental pollution, traffic accident deaths, congestion, the waste of oil energy, etc. have been accumulated since the 1970's. And, the continuation of that industry in the 21st century is in doubt.

However, it ITS, which reproduces the automobile usage patterns, that will solve these problem by using information communication technology.

The author interviewed automakers' researchers and engineers in 4 Cities in Germany in September 1999, and investigated the situation of the research and development of ITS in Germany which was the advanced country of the automobile industry.

These interviews revealed that Germany was inferior to the U.S. and Japan in the development of ITS element technology. However, in the point that the ITS technology is best used for the traditional traffic patterns of each region, Germany has advanced further than the U.S. and Japan.

Especially, the example of using ITS to defend a historical tradition that pedestrians have the priority in the center part of the town and the example that a canal which has been maintained traditionally is an important composition element of ITS, should be learnt by us.

Moreover, as ITS is effectively used in Germany to promote "the parking and riding" system in which people transfer from a passenger car to the public traffic conveyances such as subways, trams, and electric buses, Germany advanced by one step in practical use for traffic in the city and between cities.

People in Germany have been attempting to unite a traditional culture and a new technology in the automobile industry by responding to the global standard but without losing the cultural tradition in this region.

Key Words : ITS, Germany, automobile industry